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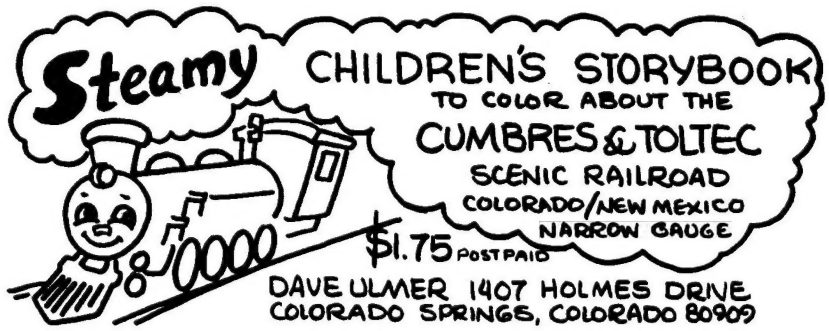
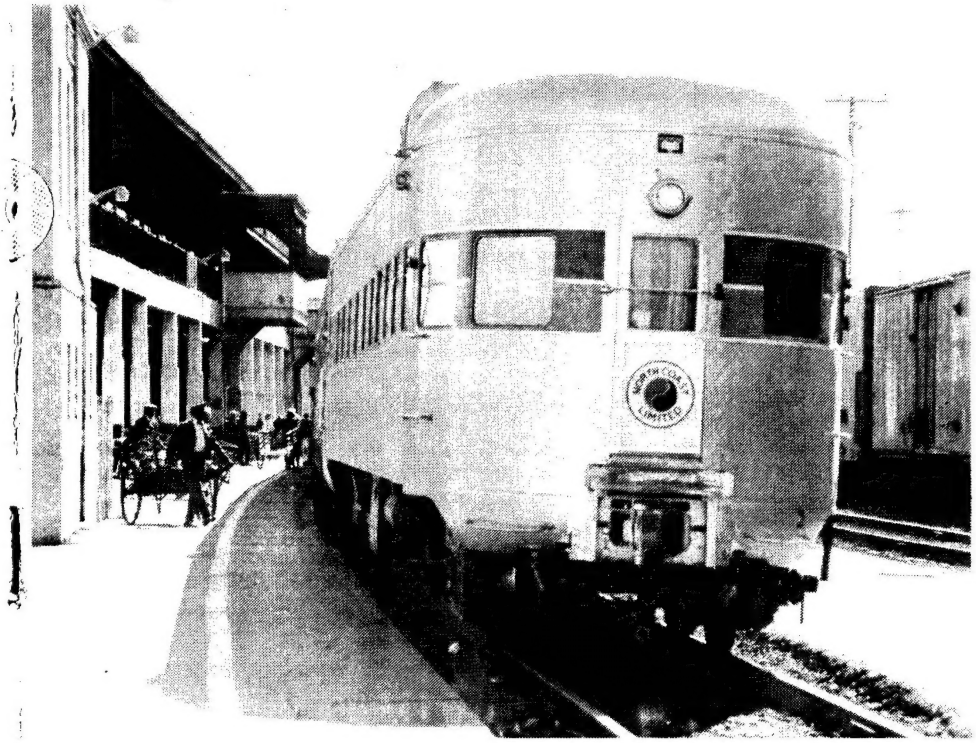
CZ/73--A plan that will really make the trains worth traveling again and make a profit for AMTRAK, too!



RAIL TRAVEL newsletter

25¢

VOL. 3 NO. 19
FIRST ISSUE OF
OCTOBER 1973
#69



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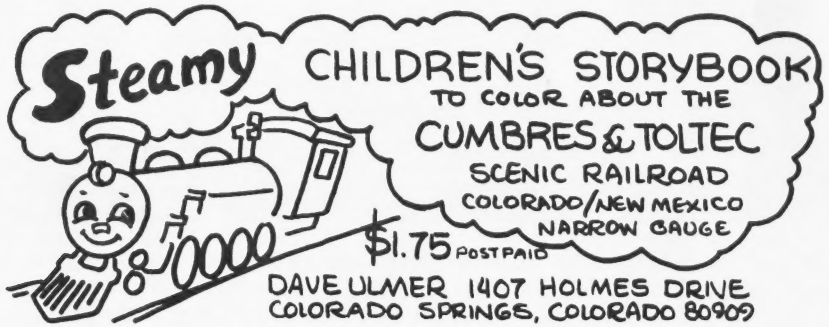

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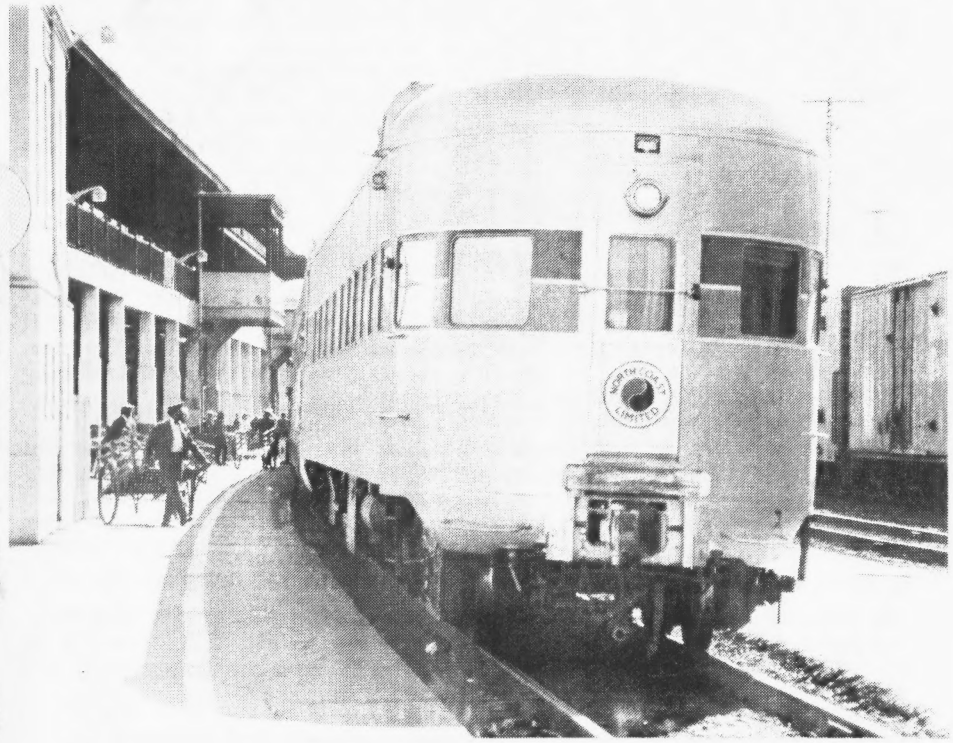


ON THE COVER: Now arriving on track one--Amtrak's SAN FRANCISCO NORTH COAST ZEPHYR LIMITED?? On this Sept. 23, the privately owned observation car, "The Hulham," was bringing up the rear of Amtrak train 5, seen here on arrival at Oakland, one hour late. This car, used for a tour movement, is now in the required Amtrak stripes but still bears the drumhead of its parent train. Built in 1948 by Pullman-Standard for the NORTH COAST LIMITED, the 1 compartment/4 double bedroom/buffet observation car was originally Northern Pacific's "Tacoma Club," later designated simply NP 392 before it passed into private ownership. Photo by Ted Nelson.

LETTERS

This letter, like the proverbial stone, hopefully may kill two birds. The first is praise for a most informative and timely, if not always completely objective, publication of unfailing interest, issue after issue. Second is a brief, and favorable, report on nearly 8000 miles of Amtrak riding over the last two weeks of August.

...If any impression remains from the recent trips on SOUTHERN CRESCENT (both Southern & Amtrak), SUNSET, DAYLIGHT/STARLIGHT, PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL, NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, EMPIRE BUILDER and BROADWAY, it is that Amtrak is breaking its corporate hump to make the slogan, "We're making trains worth traveling again," become fact rather than copywriter's rhetoric. And considering the legislative, contractual, personal and operating obstacles that combine to produce the Amtrak Horror Stories most fans are fond of telling, they are succeeding.

Skeptical or not, I'm probably more willing than most to overlook the minor--and major--problems that have been so much a part of the rail passenger picture, perhaps because I understand their varied origins. But in all fairness, it should be noted that: (1) Each train was, without exception, late, the amount ranging from a half hour to two hours, but all for reasons that could be, and were, explained. Yet no connection...was missed. (2) It did take an extensive bit of telephoning and letter writing, etc., to line up reservations for space they way I wanted them. But experience and patience were well-rewarded. (3) There were air-conditioning failures--but in only two of the more than 130 cars assigned to trains I rode, an unusually high percentage for even new equipment, much less that which is working on from 20 to 35 years. Further, an abundance of Amtrak-refurbished equipment was in evidence, and altho there were several specific substitutions, in no way were cars unclean or in any way unfit for service. (4) One diner did run out of lettuce and milk well into the second full day out without being able to re-stock en route, but at no time was any meal poorly or incorrectly prepared, or monumentally misserved.

In short, not a "horror story" worth telling. Not one. The trains were invariably well-filled, the crews--both Amtrak and individual railroad--were generally more than routinely accommodating (especially the sleeping car porters, rookies and Pullman veterans alike), and the ambience aboard was unfailingly high.

Richard A. Horstmann

Syracuse, New York

As soon as RTN hits my mailbox, I can't put it down until I finish reading it. I've just returned (early October) from a 2-week rail trip via SUNSET, CRESCENT, FLORIDIAN and SUPER CHIEF; and Paul Rayton's reporting in past issues proved to be all too true.

Dennis J. Kogan

Lomita, California

Rail Travel Newsletter, Vol. 3, No. 19 (Whole No. 69), 1st Issue of October, 1973. Published twice monthly by Message Media, P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley, California 94709. Subscription $6.00 per year; single copy 25¢. STAFF: James Russell, Editor; Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large; Kenneth Maylath, East Coast Correspondent; Peter Roehm, Northeastern Correspondent; Doug Ellis, Staff Photographer.
Scheduled mailing date for this issue: October 17, 1973.

AMTRAK RELEASES FINANCIAL DATA FOR FISCAL YEAR 1973

Amtrak is reporting that its deficit in fiscal 1973 amounted to $141.8 million, less than the deficit of $153.5 million in the previous fiscal year, but greater than the corporation's projected loss of $128.4 million. Amtrak's revenue for the last fiscal year jumped 16%--from $152.7 million to $177.3 million. This increase was attributed to increased ridership, estimated to be up 10% over fiscal 1972. An Amtrak official explained that the deficit was higher than earlier estimates because the Penn Central exceeded its budgeted expenses by $12.2 million.

Amtrak's latest financial figures, for June 1973, show eleven routes operating at a profit. On some of these, however, the profit is only on paper, since certain overhead costs were not applied to the routes in the accounting of that particular month. Besides the Northeast Corridor, routes showing a profit included the SUPER CHIEF and the EMPIRE BUILDER. Others close to the break-even point were Seattle-Los Angeles, Chicago-St. Louis, Chicago-Quincy, Chicago-New Orleans, Chicago-San Francisco, Los Angeles-New Orleans, Los Angeles-San Diego, and Chicago-Carbondale.

LIGHT AT THE END OF PENN CENTRAL'S TUNNEL?

At last there seems to be some hope that the long dragged out Penn Central bankruptcy may be nearing a solution. The bill currently being worked on by the House appears to be largely acceptable to the Administration, altho some problems remain to be compromised. The Administration reversed itself in part and decided to compromise to accept the Congressional desire to set up a Federal National Railway Association that would have the power to devise a "core" system of needed freight routes out of the Northeast tangle. It would then be able to grant loan guarantees to another congressionally-created body, a Northeast Rail Corporation. With this Amtrak-like solution of semi-public ownership, it is hoped that a financially viable railroad, run by the for-profit NERC, would emerge. Amtrak would be given responsibility for passenger lines. At the October 12 hearing by the judge overseeing Penn Central's case, the railroad pleaded not to be liquidated, since Congress seemed to be seriously seeking a solution, and the judge agreed that a few more weeks could be allowed for a solution. New federal track safety standards are to take effect October 16, the the Penn Central asked for an exemption from these standards, since it would be economically impossible to upgrade track to meet them at present. While awaiting a decision on the exemption request, PC temporarily discontinued freight operations on some secondary lines.

TRANSIT SUBSIDY BILL IS EXPECTED TO BE VETOED

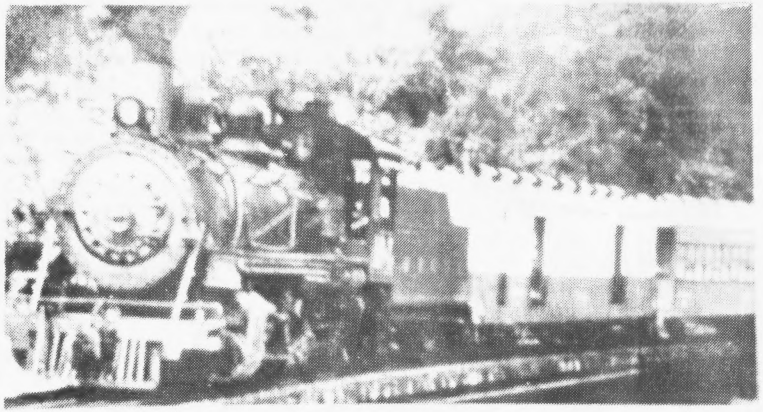
We reported here earlier on the bill to provide subsidies for operation of mass transit systems, $800 million for two years, passed by the Senate Sept. 10. The House passed a similar bill Oct. 3, and a compromise is expected out of committee soon. However, it is said to be a certainty that Pres. Nixon will veto the bill, being strongly opposed to direct subsidies for operating expenses of mass transit.

AMTRAK IS SUING WASHINGTON UNION STATION OWNERS

Amtrak has filed a $4.5 million damage suit against the Washington Terminal Co. and six railroads that own Union Station, charging that they violated anti-trust laws in discriminating against Amtrak's usage of the terminal.

CITY DRIVING TO BE MORE DIFFICULT

The Environmental Protection Agency made public at mid-month plans to require eight large urban areas, including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Houston, and Boston to place surcharges on parking lot usage to discourage auto use in cities. At the same time, the EPA relaxed earlier-announced plans for gasoline rationing in such areas, but did not indicate how long it would delay the rationing plan, which met strong opposition from city officials. Meanwhile, the price of gasoline has been permitted by federal regulators to rise again on Oct. 16.



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Urban-Suburban Transit

SAN FRANCISCO BART SERVICE SET: November 5 is the date that service will begin between San Francisco and Daly City on the Bay Area Rapid Transit system. This route will be isolated from the rest of the system in the Eastbay, since trans-bay runs are not expected to start until March or April of 1974.

NEW YORK'S BIG TRANSPORTATION BOND ISSUE, to be voted upon early in November, is in trouble, reports the New York Times. A smaller bond issue was soundly defeated in 1971, and altho there have been some major switches of influential toward favoring the present plan, which is weighted 60 to 40 in favor of mass transit, there is also a good deal of opposition. Some feel that interest rates are too high now for such a bond issue, and that the federal government should come to the state's aid instead of the taxpayer taking upon an added burden. The total money involved is $3.5 billion.

MARTA, the METROPOLITAN ATLANTA RAPID TRANSIT AUTHORITY, is advertising in Eastern newspapers for skilled personnel in the field of cost estimating for rapid transit construction.

MEXICO'S SUBWAY SYSTEM is attractive but poorly designed, complains a Queens letter writer in the New York Times. Walking distance to trains is too great, he says, and the rubber-tired trains "fill the stations with the foul odor of hot rubber," and the small cars cannot hold rush-hour traffic easily, among other complaints. The system is shut down between midnight and 6am--too long a time, he believes.

VIRGINIA'S GOVERNOR RECEIVED Oct. 11 a study from the Federal Railroad Administration and the State Highway Department that concluded that a profitable, high-speed passenger train system could be operating between Washington and Richmond as early as 1976. The 113-mile long corridor could handle 80-120mph trains, reducing auto traffic on interstate 95 by 9-17%. Spending $1.7 million to upgrade the RF&P line would allow 80mph passenger train operation, with a suggestion of five trains per day, at a fare of as little as $10 for the roundtrip. Another $11 million to eliminate grade crossings would allow even faster speeds, and an even further step might be electrification to achieve 120mph speeds. At 80mph, the trip would take 80 minutes. Use of the track would hamper RF&P freight service, it was noted. Before making any recommendation to Amtrak, the Governor will make further study of the report.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC, trying to get Southern Californians off its back, has offered (Oct. 9) the Southern California Rapid Transit District the use, by purchase or lease, of a strip of its right-of-way on the Burbank branch line between Chatsworth and North Hollywood for development of a commuter busway. SP is opposed to plans to run commuter trains on the line. The Calif. Dept. of Transportation and the Rapid Transit District reacted favorably to the offer. A similar plan was put into effect earlier this year on the San Bernardino Freeway alongside SP's tracks.

SOME PUBLIC TRANSIT systems are gaining ridership. One of them is our own AC Transit bus system. Railfan reporter Harre Demoro writes in the Oakland Tribune that in the 1973 fiscal year AC Transit patronage was up, but that last June it began to climb at surprisingly high rates, a fact which AC management attributes to gasoline shortage problems. In July, trans-bay ridership jumped 9.3% over the previous year, then increased 2% in August, and 10.2% the first half of September. The figures Demoro reviews show up the adverse impact that strikes have on transit systems. AC Transit had a strike in 1970, and regular ridership has only been gradually returning to it, so that the 1968-69 fiscal year ridership figures have not yet been equalled. Similarly, BART was closed by a strike the whole month of July 1973, when it was carrying 34,000 daily. Tho increasing, the total now is 33,800.

AMTRAK TO RESTRUCTURE NORTHEASTERN SERVICE

With the upcoming October 28 timetables, the changeover date to Standard Time, a number of scheduling alterations will be found, particularly in the Northeast Corridor. These are best presented by summarizing the timetable itself. The following listings, which omit Metroliners, are correct as of Oct. 28, except for possible last-minute changes:

EAST AND NORTHBOUND EASTERN CORRIDOR TRAINS:

NO.	NAME	LEAVES		ARRIVES		NOTES
400		New Haven	7:00a	Springfield	8:35a	Monday-Friday
180	PILGRIM	Phila.	5:45a	Boston	12:10p	
402		New Haven	9:30a	Hartford	10:22a	
254		Phila.	6:33a	New York	8:30a	Monday-Friday
200		Phila.	7:00a	New York	8:47a	Monday-Friday
234		Phila.	7:00a	New York	8:52a	Saturday only
168	EAST WIND	Wash.	5:00a	Boston	1:50p	
404		New Haven	11:03a	Springfield	12:40p	
202		Phila.	8:00a	New York	9:35a	Monday-Friday
42	VALLEY FORGE	N. Phila.	8:15a	New York	9:55a	Monday-Friday; from Harrisburg to take corridor riders formerly carried on BROADWAY
256		Phila.	8:05a	New York	9:55a	Saturday only
40	BROADWAY LTD.	N. Phila.	8:33a	New York	10:00a	From Chicago
84	SILVER METEOR	Wash.	6:15a	New York	10:20a	From Florida
204		Phila.	9:00a	New York	10:47a	Monday-Saturday
280		Phila.	9:10a	New York	11:08a	Sunday only
170	MINUTE MAN	Wash.	7:05a	Boston	3:35p	
86	CHAMPION	Wash.	7:45a	New York	11:45a	From Florida
406		New Haven	1:00p	Springfld	2:35p	
206		Phila.	10:15a	New York	11:58a	
172	SOUTH. CRESCENT	Wash.	9:05a	Boston	5:45p	From Birmingham
408		New Haven	3:00p	Hartford	3:55p	Monday-Friday
210		Phila.	12:15p	New York	1:56p	Monday-Saturday
96	VACATIONER	Wash.	10:45a	New York	2:50p	From Florida, starts Dec.15
418		New Haven	3:00p	Springfld	4:40p	Sunday only
30	NATIONAL LTD.	N. Phila.	12:29p	New York	2:05p	From Kansas City
410		New Haven	4:00p	Springfld	5:40p	Monday-Friday
174	STATESMAN	Wash.	11:05a	Boston	7:40p	
144	BAY STATE	New Haven	5:00p	Boston	8:50p	
184	BUNKER HILL	Phila.	2:15p	Boston	8:35p	Monday-Friday
142	CONN. YANKEE	Phila.	3:00p	Springfld	8:10p	
176	SENATOR	Wash.	1:05p	Boston	9:35p	
218		Phila.	4:15p	New York	5:55p	
152	YANKEE CLIPPER	New York	6:30p	Boston	10:35p	Turbotrain
416		New Haven	8:15p	Hartford	9:10p	Sunday-Friday
220		Phila.	5:00p	New York	6:38p	Monday-Friday
160	MURRAY HILL	Wash.	3:05p	New York	6:55p	
222		Phila.	6:00p	New York	7:38p	Sunday-Friday
178	MERCHANTS LTD.	Wash.	4:05p	Boston	12:20a	
82	SILVER STAR	Wash.	4:10p	New York	8:10p	From Florida
224		Phila.	7:00p	New York	8:45p	Sunday-Friday
60	MONTREALER	Wash.	5:05p	Springfld	12:40a	To Montreal
164	NEW YORKER	Wash.	7:05p	New York	11:00p	
166	NIGHT CAP	Wash.	9:00p	New York	12:55a	Sunday only
66	NIGHT OWL	Wash.	10:30p	Boston	8:25a	

(continued on page 14)

HOW TO SELF-DESTRUCT

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON THE MIS-MANAGEMENT OF AMTRAK
by C. D. Washington

The thesis of my previous article in Second February RTN was that Amtrak's managerial decisions will have more to do with the corporation's longevity than the absolute level of federal funds it receives. Two of my concerns were the apparent lack of a capital expenditures plan and the tendency to consider across-the-board fare increases as a fast, sure way to boost total revenues. While the circumstances have now changed, this situation still exists.

First, one must admit that Amtrak is now making some long overdue capital acquisitions. They have received or have on order 150 locomotives. However, 40 of these were purchased to replace the Santa Fe F units that the railroad wants for freight work. The other 110 units can generally be ascribed to the massive rate of engine failures that began in the late spring and became the leading cause of lateness on a number of routes. The fact that the old diesels cost an arm and a leg to operate, and have for two years, seems to be of secondary importance. But it's understandable--after all, it isn't Amtrak's money that goes to waste.

New rolling stock is needed no less urgently than locomotives. However, Amtrak's first step in this direction is of questionable value. I am referring to the 57 "non-powered, conventional" cars for the Northeast Corridor.

Why such an odd-ball number as 57? Well, coincidentally, the present number of Metroliner cars in use is 57. So Amtrak apparently thinks that to operate an hourly service with new equipment will also require 57 cars. Considering the still mediocre availability of the Metroliners, it doesn't say much for Amtrak's planning.

Another questionable point is the unit cost. The $418,000 price tag for each copy is considerably higher than the $300,000 generally used by Amtrak for previous cost estimates of new cars. Unofficial discussions with French car makers have revealed that the 125mph Grand Comfort cars on the Trans-Europe Express trains could be purchased by Amtrak for about $250,000 each. In any case, it appears Amtrak is about to take the taxpayers for another ride.

Furthermore, it's one thing to purchase 125mph equipment and quite another to have the right-of-way where this speed can be exploited to any degree. Even when the Metroliners were running at these speeds, only on about 55 miles of the 225-mile New York-Washington route were they allowed to operate this fast. Since that time, numerous slow orders have been placed on the track, reducing even further the segments where 125mph could be obtained. Since a locomotive-hauled train can't accelerate at the rate the Metroliner can, it appears that the average speed obtainable with this new equipment will be less than that of the Metroliners. If the New York-Washington timing is less that the three hours now made by the Metroliners, there appears to be little chance that any significant ridership increase will result, given the Metroliner fare level that is planned.

Consider the question of time-sensitive versus cost-sensitive markets. It is highly questionable to assume that the present conventional (non-Metroliner) train ridership will be maintained, since passengers are generally riding these trains because of the relatively low fares. This market is not speed-sensitive, and raising the fares will be forcing them to leave the rail mode.

The conventional train passenger traffic began dropping annually in the early 1950s and continued to do so at a steady rate until conventional fares were reduced to bus-competitive levels. Currently about 40% of all New York-Washington and New York-Baltimore passengers ride the slower conventional trains. On weekends, standing room only situations are common. If Amtrak were to eliminate a

lower fare service, rail travel appeal to the public would be greatly narrowed. By cascading older equipment into this service, it can not only be profitable, but also produce a greater revenue base and an increased spectrum of passengers; i.e., business and non-business travel--high and moderate income levels.

So it appears that what was learned during the Northeast Corridor demonstration has been lost on Amtrak. One wonders if they are even cognizant of the Department of Transportation's plans for a 150mph upgrading for the Washington-Boston route. If they are, the 57-car investment makes even less sense.

Perhaps there was a good deal more truth than anyone realized in the Roger Lewis statement made on the occasion of Amtrak's first anniversary. Concerning increased funding, the Wall Street Journal reported that Mr. Lewis said it could not possibly be spent sensibly. But then, how much of Amtrak's funds <u>are</u> being spent sensibly?

canadian news letter

THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY of Amtrak's MONTREALER/WASHINGTONIAN was heralded in a press release of September 28. The Sept. 29 anniversary ended a year with "far higher ridership than had been predicted." An average of 1,000 people daily rode the trains, with most of them in the New York-Washington segment of the route. Before the July railroad strike began in Canada, an average of 130 passengers were counted daily on each train at White River Junction, Vermont. Original estimates had been for about 113 persons per train. Over the course of the year, about 365,000 riders have used the trains, traveling 60 million passenger miles and brining in $3.3 million in revenues for Amtrak. Amtrak praised the fine support the people of New England have given the service. Amtrak built a new $300,000 station at Springfield, Mass., and Amtrak and the B&M Railroad spent over $400,000 upgrading the line between there and White River Junction. Starting Oct. 28 the northbound train will return to a 5:05pm departure time from Washington...

CANADIAN NATIONAL HAS just asked the Canadian Transport Commission for fare increases to be effective November 1. The rates are proposed to average 5.5 cents a mile for travel up to 100 miles and to decrease proportionately for longer distances. Incentive fares for youth, family and group travel would be retained. These now offer discounts of 20% on red days, 15% on white days, and 10% on blue days. Examples of new fares for the three color-coded days are: Montreal-Toronto, $12.60, $15.20 and $16.50, up from $11.50, $13.80 and $15 respectively. For Montreal-Halifax, $25, $28, $31, up from $20.50, $24.75, and $27.75. The fare increases would boost CN's gross passenger revenues by 3%, to help offset inflationary costs...

A TASK FORCE in Canada's capitol is being set up to work on the proposed consolidation of transcontinental trains of the two railroads, CP and CN. This could come about rather soon; some sources have said this fall could see the discontinuance of daily service on the two transcon trains, the CANADIAN and the SUPER CONTINENTAL. One American correspondent, just back from a transcontinental ride on CP's CANADIAN, reports that the train is the best such train in North America, despite the obvious economies being made. Best features of the run were the esprit de corps of the fine CP crews and the integrity of the train, the last-remaining intact, complete transcontinental streamliner. Ride it while you can...

HIGHWAYMEN AT WORK in Canada? Some Canadian travel literature just received here, ordered in early summer, came with a card blaming its lateness on the railroad strike and apologizing for the fact that it wouldn't help with summer planning at this time. Regardless, it was of little help to train travelers, as there was nary a mention of train service in Canada. But plenty about highways, highways, highways...

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR UPDATE

by Ken Maylath

Having been a bit out of touch with Amtrak Northeast operations this summer--especially with a trip to Mexico thrown in (RTN, 1st Sept. issue), I determined in recent weeks to do some checking. What about on-time performance? This question struck me as of special interest given the flap between the NRPC and the Penn Central over what was admittedly a degree of misrepresentation on performance of Metroliners and conventional trains. How about equipment? Getting better? In short supply? Lots of air conditioning problems?

My late summer train riding and watching indicated no great problem with the meeting of schedules--especially for runs that are strictly Northeast Corridor propositions. In this respect, things seem better.

Equipment? Apparently in tight supply and not adequate for passenger loadings in all too many cases. Air conditioning problems rear their heads (or complete electrical failures, including AC) too often. In short, the equipment situation in this area doesn't seem significantly different from what's found nationwide.

* * *

A Friday evening found me boarding the FREE STATE in Baltimore, the last conventional train out of Washington in the evening, excepting the NIGHT OWL. It boasted only 3 coaches and an ex-Pennsy parlor car. The middle coach, the snack bar, had experienced an electrical failure--no lights or air conditioning. The one behind it was refurbished and quite nice. There's no way that this train should have been dispatched with 3 coaches on a Friday evening. They were well filled out of Washington, and a large portion of the considerable crowd boarding in Baltimore had to stand. Fortunately, the conductor invited standees in the refurbished coach into the nearly empty parlor car, giving those who got a bad break to begin with an extra bonus.

We left Baltimore a couple minutes late, but arrived in Wilmington and then Philadelphia on time.

Spending but a few minutes in the City of Brotherly Love, I boarded the 9:40 Metroliner. It apparently had an unusually good run from New York, as it pulled in with a couple minutes to spare. No problems at all on the way back to Maryland--with an exactly on-time arrival in Baltimore. The Metro was not jammed, but well filled.

* * *

On Labor Day, the same trip--to Philadelphia--was repeated on different trains to observe holiday operations there. Again, an on-time situation. The train was the CHAMPION, running in two sections. First, the Northeast Corridor portion, then the Florida equipment minutes behind. Travel was heavy, of course, but there were sufficient cars and seats this time. We were on time again into Philadelphia.

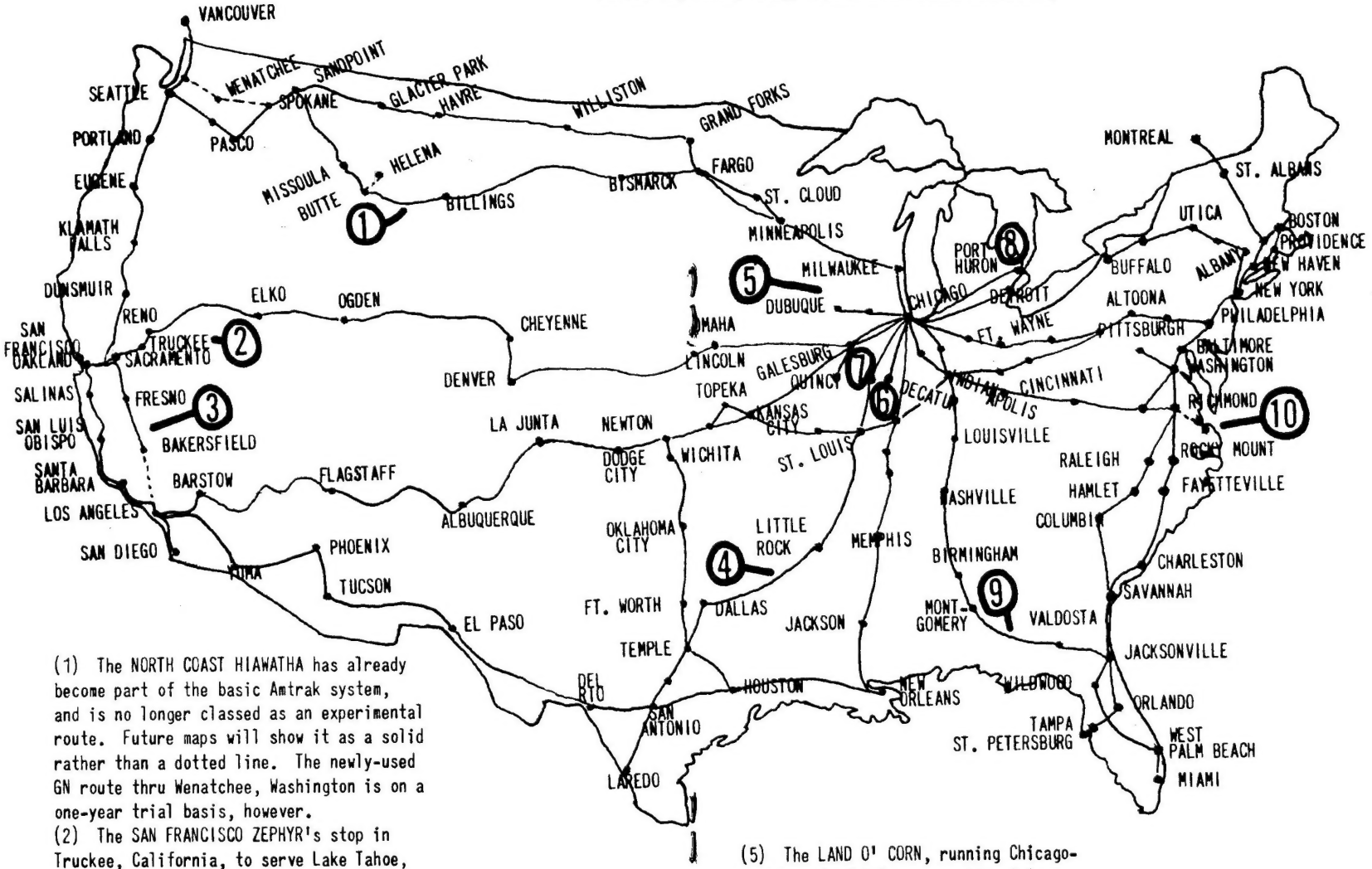
Things went smoothly during the afternoon at the 30th St. station. In spite of heavy loads, almost nothing was late. Five, maybe ten minutes here and there, especially Metroliners. The most tardy train I observed was the one on which I returned to Baltimore, the SOUTHERN CRESCENT. It came in about 15 minutes late and left 20 behind schedule after a long stop. No further trouble coming down the line, however.

Incidentally, reader Peter Espy has passed on the answer to the question I raised here in the First August issue, why Penn Central places the through cars for the SOUTHERN CRESCENT at the front of its connecting train. This is only done in the summer, he says, because almost all Southern coaches require steam to activate their air conditioning systems. Since PC does not maintain the steam lines on passenger trains during summer, Southern cars must be next to the locomotive.

(continued on page 12)

CHANGING THE AMTRAK MAP

UPCOMING ROUTE CHANGES THAT ALTER THE FACE OF THE AMTRAK SYSTEM MAP
Follow the number code. Non-Amtrak routes not shown.



(1) The NORTH COAST HIAWATHA has already become part of the basic Amtrak system, and is no longer classed as an experimental route. Future maps will show it as a solid rather than a dotted line. The newly-used GN route thru Wenatchee, Washington is on a one-year trial basis, however.

(2) The SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR's stop in Truckee, California, to serve Lake Tahoe, will be inaugurated October 28.

(3) The Oakland-Bakersfield train thru the San Joaquin Valley is upcoming, funds for it included in the bill Congress is still working on. Bus connection to L.A.

(4) The St. Louis to Laredo train, by way of Little Rock and Dallas, should be started, replacing the present INTER-AMERICAN, after Congress gives the appropriations the green light.

(5) The LAND O' CORN, running Chicago-Rockford-East Dubuque, partly state-funded, will see the light of day soon.

(6) Chicago-Kankakee-Champaign-Decatur is another new state-supported route to get underway soon.

(7) The NEW SALEM, Chicago-Bloomington-Springfield, will be state-supported.

(8) A Chicago-Port Huron, Michigan train running on Grand Trunk, is to provide a 5th rail route to Canada.

(9) An auto-ferry service is being planned on the route of the FLORIDIAN, Indianapolis-Orlando, with schedule changed to 2 days, 1 night.

(10) Amtrak still is working to drop the Richmond-Newport News section of the RILEY/WASHINGTON, substituting a bus.

(continued from page 9)

* * *

My most recent and most ambitious trip since the Mexican jaunt was a quick run to New Haven. This was arranged for speed and variety. Metroliner 104 took me out of Baltimore on a Saturday morning, on time. A couple brief delays put us 5 minutes behind out of Trenton. However, a good run from that point coupled with a few minutes of slack in the schedule had us into Penn Station, New York dead on time, at 11am. There was a good load aboard the Metro, tho not capacity.

In New York, an across-the-platform transfer to THE PATRIOT, which had departed Washington at 7am. Again, equipment problems. Even with five coaches (plus parlor car) it was evident that capacity would be strained coping with the crowd which poured down the stairs. Out of New York the race between people and seats would be close. Those in one of the forward cars seemed to be doing without the benefit of lights and air conditioning as well. When we departed, two minutes late, if any seats remained they were very few and far between. A typical New York-Boston train which makes the intermediate stops between N.Y. and New Haven tends to gain rather than lose passengers until the Yale city is reached. More are getting on to travel up the line than those coming from below New York who detrain. Thus, by the time we arrived at Bridgeport--using the newly completed high level station platform--there seemed to be a few standees. The situation eased at New Haven because a few dozen got off to change for the single RDC car (ex-New Haven) bound for Hartford. We pulled into New Haven 5 minutes late.

The yards and platforms in New Haven contained a host of the newly delivered commuter cars, lettered Connecticut Department of Transportation. These are 11,000 volt cousins of the 3rd rail, 600 volt models in use for some time on the Long Island and suburban lines of the former New York Central. Also spotted: the former ROGER WILLIAMS RDC equipment --which on this day, at least, had not

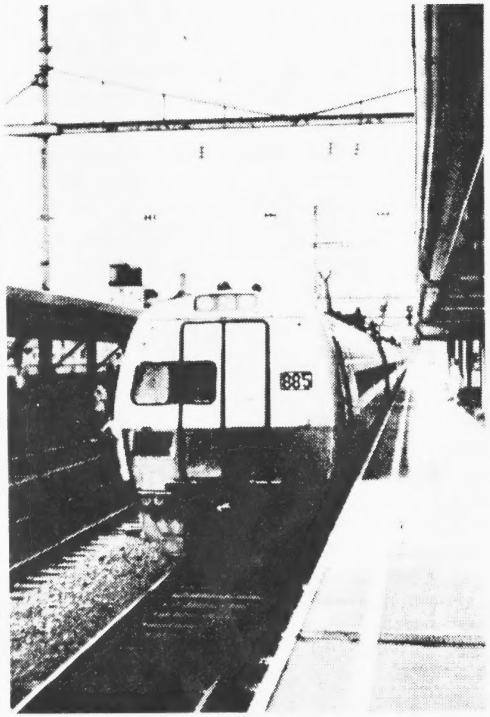
run from New Haven to Boston as train 146, the BAY STATE. (This equipment was pictured in our First August Issue.)

As things developed, I was able to sample one of the United Aircraft Turbos for the return to New York. It was due at 1:25 and listed on time. It actually arrived a couple minutes behind, but in spite of a crew change we left in only 2 minutes. Demonstration enough that time could be saved if the entire N.Y.-Boston line had been electrified, eliminating the engine change in New Haven which isn't necessary, of course, of the Turbo.

Heading for the rear observation seats, I watched as the speedometer needle touched 85 on some straight stretches--a bit more than is allowed for conventional equipment. The ride was fairly decent--improved, I think, since modifications which added additional capacity to the trains. A count showed about 100 passengers between New Haven and New York. A brief slowdown or two around New Rochelle, but no real problems and an arrival at Penn Station a minute or two late--well within Amtrak's 5-minute tolerance.

Some observations in New York showed the long distance trains as the exceptions to generally good timekeeping that Saturday. The BROADWAY eased in one hour behind, the northbound CHAMPION 30 minutes to the bad, but the perennial problem child, the NATIONAL, got the prize. Spotting it on the way to Philadelphia, I calculated a 3hr, 45min late arrival.

My transportation back to Baltimore was the 3:30pm Metroliner. It was pleasantly filled, but not jammed. It was also plagued by a series of minor delays. We lost a couple minutes at Newark while a Jersey Central suburban train crossed over in front of us into the station. There was an unscheduled stop at North Philadelphia to rescue passengers transferring from the tardy NATIONAL. Since we were a couple minutes late into Philadelphia, the SOUTHERN CRESCENT, normally passed by the Metro there, was let out ahead of us. Nor were we able to get around it on the 4-track stretch which continues most of the way to Wilmington. There are only 2 tracks into the Wilmington station itself, which meant that we



Metroliner photo by Paul Rayton.

had to wait until the CRESCENT cleared before we could get in. After all of this, we departed Wilmington 12 minutes late and arrived in Baltimore the same amount behind, finally passing the CRESCENT near Newark, Delaware.

* * *

In recent weeks I've been able to garner some reaction from a couple associates at work who sampled Amtrak service for considerable distances. One traveled from Baltimore to Rhode Island and back during his vacation. He left Baltimore early Monday morning --at 5:45am to be exact. That's the run which carried the CAROLINA SPECIAL equipment between Washington and New York on Mondays during the summer. My friend, not the shy, retiring type to begin with, was less than pleased when a crew member tried to stop him from heading back to the dining car (en route from Florida) because "the long distance passengers should have first crack at it." He would have none of it and continued back anyway. (Dining cars should be available for all passengers regardless of distance traveled. Let's hope that Amtrak hasn't issued some kind of policy which caused the reaction of the crew member.)

In any event, there were a couple small delays and the train rolled into Rhode Island about 20 minutes late. My friend also reported one of those insufficient capacity situations out of New York. Standing room only. He decided to plunk down a few extra dollars for the parlor car at that point, finding it cool, comfortable and worth the extra cost.

His return trip from Rhode Island came on a Friday, on the SENATOR, which meant running into the weekend-only equipment of the CAROLINA SPECIAL again. The run of the mill unrefurbished corridor coaches between Rhode Island and New York didn't impress him. At New York he simply moved into a nicely redone coach that was headed for Florida. He also reported a delicious, reasonably priced dinner in the diner. There were some delays, resulting in a Baltimore arrival about 50 min behind schedule.

* * *

Another associate recently sampled the CHAMPION between Orlando and Baltimore. He's a former professional sports coach who rolled up countless railroad miles back in the days when pro teams traveled that way. Here again, compliments for Amtrak's food from a man who is away from home cooking--at restaurants and banquets--frequently. High grades also for the on-time performance. On time out of Orlando, into Washington, into Baltimore. My friend traveled in a bedroom. About the only complaint he voiced was on cleanliness of the equipment. It was his first train ride outside the Northeast Corridor for some time, and his basic feeling was that Amtrak seems to be doing a pretty good job.

* * *

In short, things seem to be reasonably reliable these days around here, as we await the solution of the Penn Central's financial dilemma as prescribed by Uncle Sam. We may not have dome cars and hi-level equipment, but we are in the unique position of having more service available now than when Amtrak took over.

(continued from page 6)

WEST AND SOUTHBOUND EASTERN CORRIDOR TRAINS:

NO.	NAME	LEAVES		ARRIVES		NOTES
237		New York	6:35a	Phila.	8:25a	Monday-Saturday
201		New York	7:17a	Phila.	9:02a	Monday-Friday
165	MURRAY HILL	New York	8:00a	Wash.	11:59a	
61	WASHINGTONIAN	Springfld	4:25a	Wash.	12:59p	From Montreal
161	EAST WIND	Boston	5:10a	Wash.	1:55p	Monday-Saturday
81	SILVER STAR	New York	10:10a	Wash.	2:45p	To Florida
141	CONN. YANKEE	Springfld	7:00a	Phila.	12:40p	
181	QUAKER	Boston	7:10a	Phila.	1:50p	Monday-Friday
211		New York	12:01p	Phila.	1:50p	Saturday & Sunday only
401		Springfld	9:15a	New Haven	10:55a	Monday-Friday
169	MINUTE MAN	Boston	8:10a	Wash.	4:55p	Connection to #83
31	NATIONAL LTD.	New York	1:35p	N. Phila.	3:03p	To Kansas City
213		New York	2:00p	Phila.	3:45p	
83	SILVER METEOR	New York	2:50p	Wash.	6:50p	To Florida
149	BAY STATE	Boston	9:00a	New Haven	12:45p	
171	SO. CRESCENT	Boston	10:10a	Wash.	6:55p	To Birmingham
85	CHAMPION	New York	3:50p	Wash.	7:50p	To Florida
217		New York	4:00p	Phila.	5:45p	
219		New York	4:32p	Phila.	6:13p	Sunday-Friday
41	BROADWAY LTD.	New York	4:55p	N. Phila.	6:18p	To Chicago
405		Springfld	1:20p	New Haven	2:55p	
173	STATESMAN	Boston	12:10p	Wash.	8:45p	
221		New York	5:03p	Phila.	6:45p	Sunday-Friday
43	VALLEY FORGE	New York	5:14p	N. Phila.	6:41p	
153	YANK. CLIPPER	Boston	1:10p	New York	5:05p	Turbotrain
223		New York	5:32p	Phila.	7:15p	Monday-Friday
95	VACATIONER	New York	5:45p	Wash.	9:45p	To Florida, starts Dec.14
167	CHESAPEAKE	New York	6:00p	Wash.	10:10p	
409		Springfld	3:20p	New Haven	4:55p	
177	SENATOR	Boston	2:10p	Wash.	10:45p	
227		New York	7:05p	Phila.	8:50p	
411		Hartford	4:40p	New Haven	5:35p	Monday-Friday
229		New York	8:00p	Phila.	9:37p	Sunday-Friday
413		Hartford	6:05p	New Haven	7:00p	
179	MERCHANTS LTD.	Boston	4:20p	Wash.	12:40a	
233		New York	10:00p	Phila.	11:38p	Monday-Saturday
185	SUNDOWN	Boston	5:10p	Wash.	1:50a	Sunday only
415		Springfld	7:20p	New Haven	8:55p	
183	BUNKER HILL	Boston	6:10p	Phila.	12:50a	
417		Hartford	9:40p	New Haven	10:35p	Sunday-Friday
235		New York	12:01a	Phila.	1:55a	
67	NIGHT OWL	Boston	10:30p	Wash.	8:30a	

Metroliner service, not listed above, has slight changes. There remain 15 daily trains leaving Washington in a memory pattern on the hour beginning at 6am. From New York the Metroliners have a clearer memory pattern, all departing on the half hour from 6:30am to 8:30pm. The 11:30pm train is dropped, and a 9:45pm train substituted. All Metroliners make the N.Y.-Washington run in slightly over 3 hours. One of the two Turbotrain runs has been dropped.

The new schedule will revive more historic conventional train names--the SUNDOWN, PILGRIM, MURRAY HILL, STATESMAN. Trains 171-172 were to be renamed the SHORELINER, but pressure from Southern Railway prompted Amtrak to retain the name SOUTHERN CRESCENT.

The new train names do not in all cases mean new trains. One train which is new is the VALLEY FORGE, tho with an old name. It runs just ahead of the BROADWAY LIMITED between Harrisburg and New York to service corridor passengers who would otherwise squeeze aboard the long-distance BROADWAY.

Starting Dec. 14 and 15 the winter Florida service gets underway, as reflected in the above tables. Each of the four trains will run at 18-car limits. The FLORIDIAN is expected to go to a day-night-day schedule Dec. 14, leaving Chicago at 8:55am. Amtrak's planned auto-ferry service apparently will be on this train. For this and some additional system-wide changes coming up, see the map and captions on pages 10-11.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"How many passenger options (such as car, bus, train, and air) should there be between each city and who is to bear the costs of those modes--such as rail passenger or the feeder airlines--that are not economically supporting by themselves? Should we now forcibly encourage energy-efficient modes, such as intercity rail and bus, and discourage inefficient ones, such as air and private cars? These questions pose extremely complex public policy issues and have the potential to push the federal government considerably further into our daily lives than we are used to."

--Transportation Secretary Claude Brinegar at annual forum of the National Defense Transportation Association, Washington, D.C., Sept. 26

"We could conserve oil by taking trucks, buses and commuter cars off the roads, building up our neglected railroad system, and constructing new urban transport systems."

--Clare Boothe Luce in letter to Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Sept. 27

"Nothing would serve them (the gasoline-auto-highway complex) better, and reassert the supposed superiority of the consumer more effectively, than for this to be the time when the American public in vast numbers says: Keep your gasoline; we're going to ride the train."

--Columnist Ernest B. Furgurson, Sept. 28

AMTRAK PLACES NEW EQUIPMENT ORDER

Amtrak announced October 12 that it is placing two equipment orders totalling $63.5 million. The first is with the Budd Company, whose Red Lion, PA plant is to build 57 passenger cars of the Metroliner type, but unpowered, for use in the Washington-Boston corridor. These are the cars alluded to by C. D. Washington in the article starting on page 7. The cars can be pulled by either electric or diesel engines, and will have interiors similar to the current self-propelled Metroliner cars, but with improved ride characteristics. Delivery of these is to begin in early 1975, and the cost is $24 million. Amtrak expects to add most of the cars to the existing Metroliners to almost double the number of seats available. Some cars may be used on other parts of the route.

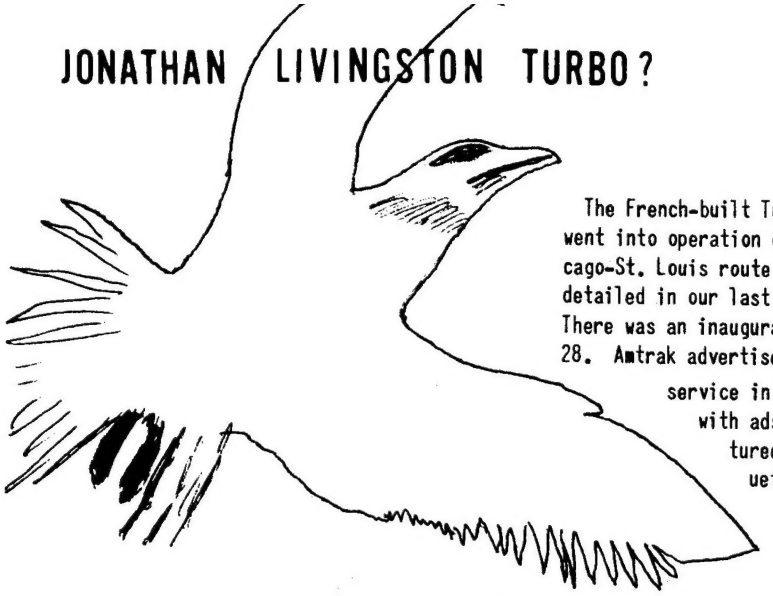
Amtrak also ordered 70 3000-hp diesel locomotives and 11 6000-hp electric locomotives, the former from the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors and the latter from the General Electric Company of Erie, PA. Delivery of the electrics will start in November, 1974, the diesels early next summer.

Design proposals for other passenger cars are due November 1 from two firms in competition for Amtrak's money. At least 100 cars of this "new generation" of rolling stock will be ordered, to be used on all Amtrak non-corridor routes.

TV RAILROAD MOVIE FEATURES RIO GRANDE SKI TRAIN

ABC's Suspense Movie, "Runaway," telecast national Sept. 29, was filmed on the D&RGW trackage between Winter Park, Colorado at the west portal of the Moffat Tunnel, and downtown Denver, where a stub track at Union Station was labeled "Jackson City."

JONATHAN LIVINGSTON TURBO?



The French-built Turbotrains went into operation on the Chicago-St. Louis route Oct. 1, as detailed in our last issue. There was an inaugural run Sept. 28. Amtrak advertised the new service in the Midwest with ads that featured the silhouette of a soaring gull, as in the above illustration. A photo of a Turbotrain was superimposed on the body of the bird. The ads read, "Introducing the jet train that glides down the track --Amtrak's new Turboliner." The term "Turboliner" is applied to all the trains on the route; there are no individual train names for the different runs. The ads continued, "Amtrak's jet-powered Turboliner may well be the biggest advance in travel since the 747. You glide down the track so smoothly you can scarcely feel the rails. So quietly you can even hear a whisper. Interiors feature French styling in simple sunny colors. There's even a grill with tables where you snack in comfort. Come ride the future on Amtrak's Turboliner. It's the train of tomorrow. And the Midwest has it first." Unfortunately, newspapers were on strike in St. Louis as the new runs began, but a few tabloids were about, carrying the ads. Turbotrain schedules were printed in the ads, but in the St. Louis edition we saw the departure times from that city were unfortunately omitted. No phone numbers were given.

Amtrak issued a two-sided, red-white-and-blue timecard for the Oct. 1 change, in an edition of 200,000. The schedules were generally identical to that printed in our last issue from Amtrak's earlier press release. However, a few minor alterations in intermediate-point times--2 or 3 minutes--were made. There was one typographical error in our last issue's timetable: the STATE HOUSE leaves Pontiac, IL northbound at 8:35am, not 8:53. The timecard shows connecting Hiavatha Service between Chicago and Milwaukee. Times between connections vary from 10 minutes to 1 hour, 23 minutes, the latter in the case of the 3:20pm departure from Milwaukee.

Initial reports indicate that regular riders in the Milwaukee-St. Louis corridor are unhappy over the loss of their parlor cars and diners. There's also unhappiness in Milwaukee over the lack of a 5:20pm "after-work" departure for Chicago. The new Turbos have been missing their connections, and this is attributed to their relatively poor acceleration at low speeds. They do their best at high speeds, but the line is limited to only 79mph. With the new schedule arrangement there is no weekday connection to Milwaukee from the afternoon Detroit train or from the SHAWNEE from Carbondale and Champaign. The conventional train that takes over on weekends for the Turboliner equipment has been named the WEEKENDER.

AMTRAK

PROGRESS REPORT ON PETITION FOR MANAGEMENT CHANGE AND ELIMINATION OF ANTI-PASSENGER RAILROAD FORCES ON AMTRAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Since my advertisement appeared in RTN, response has been heavy requesting petition forms calling for the resignation of Amtrak President Roger Lewis as well as elimination of railroad parties on Amtrak's Board of Directors.

The response I have received since my ad appeared reveals two interesting points. First, it proves an enormous number of concerned passenger train users subscribe to RTN. Secondly, the response my ad obtained proves that I am not alone in my belief that Amtrak management should be held responsible for the unreasonably slow progress we are experiencing in Amtrak's revival of the American passenger train.

As the momentum gathers on the implementation of the petition, I feel I should explain more directly why I feel Roger Lewis must go. I firmly believe that White House forces do not wish to see Amtrak succeed. Roger Lewis is a Nixon appointee and is, therefore, a direct link to the anti-Amtrak White House forces. Roger Lewis must be replaced by someone who will disregard White House pressure to curtail Amtrak's progress, expansion, etc.

As for Harold Graham and other management individuals, under Roger Lewis, I have no knowledge as to their hinderance or helpfulness to Amtrak's progress. Therefore, I don't want the petition to create a bad climate for those at work in Amtrak trying to provide us with good trains.

I want to see Mr. Lewis and his associates, delaying Amtrak's progress, replaced by an aggressive, non-White House or railroad-influenced management team starting from Mr. Lewis's position and cleaning house all the way down the line, ridding Amtrak of shadows of Mr. Lewis, yet retaining those who are doing a good job. It must be understood that there are many at Amtrak dedicated to and doing an excellent job. However, Amtrak's mission is so great that it requires a 100% effective management team. It is this team that I want this petition to help create!

How many empty seats on Amtrak trains this winter are empty because those who experienced bad trips during the summer won't use Amtrak again and are using alternate transportation now, when Amtrak needs repeat business?

I am sending petition forms to you as fast as I receive your letters!

STEVE LANNES, 3952 HARRISON ST. #101, OAKLAND, CALIF. 94611.

mixed train of thoughts

ANTHONY HASWELL, CHAIRMAN of NARP, told state highway officials in Arkansas this month that they should use their knowledge and expertise to rebuild the nation's railroads. Concrete roadbeds on important lines would provide a much-needed upgrading of American rail lines; foreign countries are 'way ahead of us in this technology. The British and working on an almost maintenance-free roadbed made of a continuous slab of concrete..... HOW TO BEAT the BART electronically-coded pass cards was pictorially detailed in Business Week magazine, Aug. 11 issue. Regular recording tape is used to duplicate the magnetic coding put on by BART's machines... OHIO STATE TRANSPORTATION Dept. and Amtrak officials have been discussing the possibility of connecting Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati by passenger train. No definite plans have been announced..... ALL TWO THOUSAND Amtrak employees are covered now by an employee protection plan agreed to by Amtrak and the unions representing railroad employees early this month..... YOU'VE PROBABLY SEEN those fine Ballantine's Scotch ads now circulating, with posters of old and elegant transportation modes: so far, the 20th Century Limited and the Mauretania cruise ship..... IS AMTRAK BEGINNING a large re-naming effort on its passenger cars? So far the 6 bdrm lounge No. 3228, formerly the "Colonial Beach," has suddenly been dubbed the "William A. Griffin Jr."..... THREE REFURBISHED SNACK-COACHES have been delivered for Amtrak's Empire Service, and another 7 are at Pullman-Standard getting the treatment. Also look for round-end observations 3341, 3342, and 3345 on Empire Service trains..... LAST ISSUE WE pictured RDC #32, just refurbished by the Reading shops. Now #31 has just emerged also, and will presumably join its companion at Chicago...

* * *

ON-TIME PERFORMANCE of Amtrak trains hit its lowest point ever in July, and was only a hair better in August. Graphs show Amtrak performance in a steady downhill trend since Dec. 1971. Two months in a row, Southern Pacific got the honors for the worst on-time record--21.6% in July, 11.9% in August. Summary totals for August: Turbos 25.6%, Metroliners 51.4%, conventional corridor trains 63.1%, long distance trains 17.5%. Overall, 51.4% of Amtrak's trains were on time at their "end points"..... ROUTE MAP-BROCHURES are now available on these trains: EMPIRE BUILDER, NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, SUPER CHIEF, BROADWAY LIMITED, PANAMA LIMITED, MERCHANTS LIMITED, and trains of the "Florida Fleet." Others are in preparation for other Amtrak trains. Amtrak has published its first picture postcards for distribution on trains. The first show the COAST STARLIGHT rounding a bay on Puget Sound, the French-built Turboliner, and dining car, coach and lounge scenes..... BESIDES THE RENO Fun Train and the upcoming service to Truckee and its ski resorts, Amtrak is offering a new Reno Do-as-U-Please Tour this winter using the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR. The tours include an overnight stay, transportation, a meal and lounge-show and "Good Luck Pack." They begin at $38, triple-occupancy..... ONE TRAVEL AGENT that puts out some neat little, pocket-sized booklets with full information about your train tour is Midwest Travel Service of Midwest City, Oklahoma. It struck us as a great idea..... SORRY ABOUT THAT--the location of the nudist beach seen from the COAST DAYLIGHT. It's south, not north of Santa Barbara..... SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, California is starting a campaign to get back its passenger stop on the SAN DIEGAN route..... RUMORS ARE FLYING in Denver about a possible Billings-Denver-La Junta Amtrak run to connect with the SUPER CHIEF and the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA..... RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR carried 350 passengers westbound from Denver on Oct. 6, using 5 domes in a 9-car train, for a tour to Glenwood Springs..... THE OFFICIAL GUIDE will soon publish passenger-only and freight-only editions..... THE ILLINOIS ZEPHYR derailed northbound 25 miles north of LaSalle Oct. 4, with minor injuries to 6 passengers. Cars did not overturn..... CHICAGO-DUBUQUE TRAIN will be named the LAND O' CORN, not WINNEBAGO. Name was chosen in a contest won by J. David Ingles of Trains magazine and Mrs. Patricia Olson.....

Express Ads

1884 ROCK ISLAND TIMETABLE & SYSTEM MAP. An authentic reproduction, 18" x 38" printed on top quality paper. Only $1 ea. plus 25¢ per order handling & postage. Make check or M.O. payable to "Rock Island Lines" and send to: Public Relations Dept., Rock Island Lines, 139 W. Van Buren St., Chicago, IL 60605.

SAN JOSE-S.F./OAKLAND-SACRAMENTO CORRIDOR TRAIN? Under Section 403 of the Amtrak Act, the state of California could initiate such a service. Those interested in signing or circulating petitions for such a service please contact: R. D. Hibbard, 3271 Curling Ct., San Jose, CA 95121. These petitions will be sent to the State Legislature and Amtrak.

TIMETABLE BARGAINS!! PUBLIC TIMETABLE GRAB BAGS. $9.00 worth of timetables only $4. $18.00 worth of timetables only $8, $27.00 worth of timetables only $12. My selection but I guarantee a nice variety of roads, dates and forms, all excellent condition, most items early 1960's. Special clear plastic covers for public timetables, beautiful, strong, over 100,000 sold so far, six cents each. Order any quantity any time. Sample free. Large public timetable list fifty cents. I buy timetable collections.
Tom Coval, 21 E. Robin Road, Holland, PA 18966.

RAILROAD UNIFORM BUTTONS 50¢ each postpaid. Santa Fe, Union Pacific, Western Pacific, Northern Pacific, Key System, Denver and Salt Lake, Salt Lake and Utah, Pere Marquette, Monon and Rock Island. J. Lajoie, 22 Stevens Street, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

TRAINWATCHING QUESTION: Have you ever been frustrated by picking bad times for train watching? To help railfans, a new 24 page booklet has just been published containing charts and data on two class A railroads as a case example. Various charts consider activity during the day, time of week, percentages, and more for two months at a single location. "Case Data For Train Watchers" for only $1.25. David D. Croteau, P. O. Box 1016, Dept. TW111Z, Colton, California 92324.

HOW TO ADVERTISE IN THIS NEWSLETTER: EXPRESS ADS (80 typewriter characters and spaces per line) cost just 25¢ per line (minimum $1). DISPLAY ADS: $10 full page (5x8 inches); half page $5; quarter page $2.50; eighth page $1.25 (prices are for camera-ready copy--final size, black ink; extra charge for reductions, enlargements, halftone preparation). Send remittance with orders under $10 to: Message Media, Dept. RTN, Box 9007, Berkeley, California 94709.

THE FIRST NEW Amtrak SDP40F diesels to be used on the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, units 528 and 529, pull the train at speed thru Berkeley, Calif., under lowering rain clouds on Oct. 6 for an on-time Oakland arrival. Photo by Message Media.